

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 231615Z DEC 75
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3558
INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY RABAT

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ALGIERS 3661

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SS, AG, MO, MR, SP

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA: VIEWS OF HAMDANI

1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR HAMDANI EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT FATE OF INDIGENOUS POPULATION IN SAHARA AND SAYS PROBLEM CANNOT BE SOLVED WITHOUT ALGERIA AND U.S., AND LATTER SHOULD INFLUENCE HASSAN TO STOP THE KILLING. MENTIONS POSSIBILITY MOROCCANS WILL FIND THEMSELVES IN CONFRONTATION WITH ALGERIA BUT DOES NOT DWELL ON IT. SUGGESTS THAT SELF DETERMINATION REQUIREMENT COULD BE TAKEN CARE OF THROUGH CONSULTING JEMAA (SIC), AS PROVIDED FOR IN MADRID AGREEMENT. ALTHOUGH PEACEFUL ACCESSION OF SAHARA TO MOROCCO WOULD BE CONTRARY ALGERIAN INTERESTS, THEY WOULD ACCEPT IT IF THAT WHAT SAHARANS WANTED. THIS IS FIRST TIME, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, THAT PROPOSAL REGARDING JEMAA SURFACED BY ALGERIANS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON DECEMBER 22 HAD LONG CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR SMAIL HAMDANI ON QUESTION SPANISH SAHARA. HE RAISED SUBJECT HIMSELF AND WENT ON FOR ALMOST AN HOUR. I REPORT HIS REMARKS AT SOME LENGTH BECAUSE THEY ARE OF INTEREST.

3. EMPHASIZING THAT HE SPEAKING FOR HIMSELF AND NOT UNDER
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INSTRUCTIONS, HAMDANI SAID KILLING OF SAHARAN POPULATION

MUST BE STOPPED. RESISTANCE OF SAHARANS TO MOROCCAN POLICY OF CONQUEST BY FORCE ILLUSTRATED, IF THERE WAS NEED FOR IT, THAT MOROCCAN TAKEOVER WAS NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH WISHES OF POPULATION.

4. PEOPLE OF SAHARA AND PARTICULARLY RGEIBAT HAD LONG HISTORY OF WARFARE AND WOULD FIGHT TO LAST MAN. THIS STRUGGLE WAS GOING TO THREATEN NOT ONLY THE ALAOUITE THRONE BUT THE STABILITY OF THE AREA.IT COULD LEAD EVENTUALLY TO MILITARY CONFRONTATION BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA. THIS WAS NOT IN ALGERIA'S INTEREST AND NOT BEING SOUGHT BY ITS LEADERS. LATTER HAD FAITHFULLY FOLLOWED A POLICY OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, WHICH MEANT NON-INTERFERENCE IN AFFAIRS OF OTHER MAGHRIB STATES, IN SPITE OF MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO INTERFERE, SUCH AS SKHIRAT IN 1971 AND BOEING INCIDENT IN 1972. THAT POLICY NOW BEING OVERTURNED BY ATTITUDE OF MOROCCO, WHICH WAS DENYING NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE TO SAHARA.

5. ALGERIANS HAD FOLLOWED POLICY OF RESTRAINT AND HAD SUFFERED IN SILENCE DURING MORE THAN A YEAR OF SHAMEFUL ATTACKS BY MOROCCAN PRESS. THEY CONTINUED TO WANT A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF DISPUTE, BUT THIS REQUIRED THAT WISHES OF PEOPLE CONCERNED BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. IN THE 20TH CENTURYONE COULD NOT IGNORE LEGITIMATE ASPIRATIONS OF PEOPLE WHO, IN HISTORICAL TERMS, HAD AS MUCH RIGHT TO NATIONAL EXISTENCE AS MOROCCANS. AFTER ALL, IT WAS SAHRAOUI (I.E., THE ALMORAVIDS) WHO ESTABLISHED FIRST TRULY NATIONAL STATEIN MOROCCO. (TRUE, UP TO A POINT.)

6. PROBLEM COULD NOT BE SETTLED WITHOUT ALGERIA, AND IT COULD NOT BE SETTLED WITHOUT U.S., WHICH SHOULD USE ITS INFLUENCE WITH HASSAN TO GET HIM TO STOP THE KILLING. WE SHOULD GO TO HIM AND SAY THAT WE HAD GIVEN HIM POLITICAL SUPPORT IN UN, BUT THAT WE COULD NOT SUPPORT HIS KILLING OF INNOCENT PEOPLE. THE SLAUGHTER SHOULD STOP. HASSAN WOULD LISTEN TO US; HE WOULD LISTEN TO NO ONE ELSE.

7. I NOTED THAT CONFRONTATION OVER SAHARA CERTAINLY NOT IN OUR INTERST AND ASKED JUST WHAT ALGERIANS FORESAW AS SECRET

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SOLUTION TO PROBLEM. MOROCCANS WERE NOW IN PHYSICAL CONTROL OF MOST OF TERRITORY. DID ALGERIANS EXPECT THEM TO WITHDRAW? DID THEY VISUALIZE SOME NEGOTIATED SOLTUION? WHAT HAD VISIT OF REDA GUDEIRA PRODUCED?

8. HAMDANI SAID HE HAD BEEN TOO BUSY WITH CONFERENCE ON SOCIALIST MANAGEMENT TO FOLLOW GUDEIRA VISIT. HE WISHED TO NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT MOROCCANS CONTROLLED ONLY ABOUT

ONE-THIRD OF SAHARA. GAME WAS STILL OPEN. WHAT ALGERIANS VISUALIZED AS SETTLEMENT WAS CONSULTATION WITH PEOPLE OF SAHARA. THIS COULD BE DONE IN TWO WAAYS--EITHER BY UN SUPERVISED PLEBESCITE OR BY CONSULTING JEMAA AS PROVIDED FOR IN MADRID AGREEMENT. IF MOROCCANS COULD FIND MAJORITY OF MEMBERS OF JEMAA WHO WOULD VOTE FOR ACCESSION TO MOROCCO, SO BE IT. HE DOUBTED THEY COULD DO SO, BECAUSE MOST MEMBERS OF JEMAA HAD FLED FROM MOROCCANS AND RALLIED TO POLISARIO, BUT LET THEM GIVE IT A TRY.

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9. I ASKED HIM WHEREABOUTS OF MEMBERS OF JEMAA WHO HAD COME TO ALGERIA TWO WEEKS AGO. HE SAID MOST OF THEM HAD RETURNED TO THE FRONT TO CONTINUE STRUGGLE. THEY WERE ALL TRIBAL LEADERS WHO BELONGED WITH THEIR PEOPLE.

10. I SAID THERE SEEMED TO ME TO BE BASIC CONTRADICTION IN ALGERIAN POSITION. ON ONE HAND THEY SPOKE OF SELF-DETERMINATION AND ON OTHER HAND THEY SPOKE OF STABILITY OR BALNACE (TAWAAZUN) IN AREA. WHAT DID THEY MEAN BY THIS LATTER TERM? HAMDANI SAID THEY MEANT ALL ASPECTS OF BALANCE--STRATEGIC, ECONOMIC, GEOGRAPHIC ETC. I THEN ASKED HOW THEY COULD RECONCILE THIS WITH SELF-DETERMINATION. WHAT IF THE SAHARANS VOTED TO GOT WITH MOROCCO? THAT WOULD MEAN BALANCE WOULD BE UPSET JUST AS MUCH AS IF MOROCCO TOOK OVER BY FORCE, WOULD IT NOT?

11. HAMDANI SAID QUESTION WELL PUT. CONCERN OF ALGERIANS WAS WHETHER IMBALANCE CREATED PEACEFULLY OR BY FORCE. IF

SAHARANS VOTED TO BE PART OF MOROCCO, ALGERIANS WOULD NOT LIKE IT AND WOULD SEE IT AS CONTRARY TO THEIR INTERESTS, BUT WOULD HAVE TO ACCEPT IT. WHAT THEY COULD NOT ACCEPT WAS THAT LEGITIMATE DESIRES OF PEOPLE BE IGNORED AND THAT THEY BE REQUIRED BY FORCE TO ACCEPT MOROCCAN SUZERAINITY.

12. I SAID IT DIFFICULT FOR US TO DO WHAT HAMDANI SUGGESTED. HASSAN WOULD NOT TAKE KINDLY TO OUR TELLING HIM HIS THRONE WAS IN DANGER, FOR INSTANCE. HAMDANI SUGGESTED WE TELL
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HIM THAT THIS AFFAIR WAS MORE DANGEROUS AND DIFFICULT THAN HE REALIZED AND THAT WE COULD NOT SUPPORT HIM IN HIS KILLING OFF OF INDIGENOUS POPULATION. I SAID WOULD REPORT HIS REMARKS, BUT MADE NO COMMENT OTHER THAN THOSE REPORTED ABOVE.

13. COMMENT: SEVERAL OF HAMDANI'S REMARKS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST. FIRST WAS THAT REGARDING JEMAA. TO BEST OUR KNOWLEDGE THIS IS FIRST TIME AGLERIANS HAVE SURFACED THIS IDEA. HAMDANI MENTIONED IT TWICE AND DOUBT IF HE WOULD HAVE DONE SO UNLESS THISIDEA CURRENT IN UPPER LEVELS GOA. GIVEN FACT MOST OF JEMAA HAS EITHER RALLIED VOLUNTARILY TO POLISARIO FLAG OR BEEN SUBORNEED BY ALGERIANS, DOUBT THERE WOULD BE MUCH MOROCCAN INTEREST IN SUCH PROPOSITION. IT COULD CONCEIVABLY BE BASIS FOR COMPROMISE SOLUTION AT SOME POINT BUT AS OF NOW DOES NOT APPEAR TO US THAT EITHER SIDE PREPARED MAKE CONCESSIONS THIS WOULD REQUIRE. AM NEVERTHELESS INTRIGUED BY HAMDANI'S MENTION OF IT AND SUSPECT WE MAY HEAR MORE ON SUBJECT.

14. SECOND WAS RELAXED WAY IN WHICH HAMDANI SPOKE OF OUR SUPPORT FOR PRO-MOROCCAN RESOLUTION AT UN.HAD EXPECTED SOME FIREWORKS IN THAT RESPECT, BUT WAY IN WHICH HE RAISED IT, ON TWO SEPARATE OCCASIONS, IMPLIED ALGERIANS RESIGNED TO OUR DOING SO AND RECOGNIZED THAT WE WITHIN OUR RIGHTS.

15. THIRD WAS HIS REPEATED EMPHASIS ON SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS WHICH TAKING PLACE ON THE NEED TO STOP IT. HE MENTIONED MILITARY CONFRONTATION ONLY ONCE, ALMOST IN PASSING, AND THERE WERE NO IMPLIED THREATS, OF SORT I GOT FROM BOUMEDIENE, THAT ALGERIA WAS GOING TEACH MOROCCO A LESSON. IT WOULD BE MISTAKE TO READ TOO MUCH INTO THIS, BUT HE CERTAINLY DID NOT SOUND AS THOUGH ALGERIANS THOUGHT THEY WERE WINNING. IN THAT FRAME OF MIND THERE ARE TWO REACTIONS, EITHER OF WHICH WOULD BE IN CHARACTER FOR ALGERIANS: (A) TO SEEK A COMPROMISE, (B) TO WORK QUIETLY ON AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE FOR EVERYONE. AS OF TODAY I THINK THE ODDS ARE ABOUT EVEN AS BETWEEN THE TWO.PARKER

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